

PART A – For publication

Report for: Cabinet Member Signing

Item number:

Title: Report seeking permission to extend the meanwhile use of Osborne Grove to deliver a night shelter for people rough sleeping for two (2) years until 31/03/2027 or until a decision has been made on the long-term use of the site.

Report authorised by: Sara Sutton, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health

Lead Officer: Terry Dragatis, Implementation Manager, Housing Demand

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. This report seeks Cabinet member approval for the continued meanwhile use of the directly delivered, Osborne Grove building as a night shelter and assessment centre for people rough sleeping on a meanwhile basis for 2 years until 31/03/2027 or until the long-term usage of the building can be determined and for the Cabinet member to delegate future decisions on the extension meanwhile use to the Director for Adults, Housing and Health and Corporate Director of Finance.

2. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member;

- 2.1. Approves the continued meanwhile use of directly delivered, Osborne Grove Nursing Home, 16 Upper Tollington Park, N4 3EL, as a night shelter and assessment centre, for 2 years until 31/03/2027.
- 2.2. Note that options for the long-term use of the building and site are subject to further consideration and will be the subject of further report by officers to Cabinet.

- 2.3. Delegates authority further to extend meanwhile use of the building to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance limited to 31/03/2027.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1. The Osborne Grove building is currently in meanwhile use as a directly delivered night shelter and assessment centre and already has a team in place. The service is a critical component of the borough's approach to reducing homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough and in its first year has reduced the numbers of people rough sleeping by nearly 40%. If accepted, this proposal will ensure that there is no gap in provision for people experiencing homelessness while discussions are held on the long-term use of the building and the cohort it should accommodate. The Capital Projects and Property Team have confirmed that there is no alternative meanwhile use of the building. Officers considered that there will not be a longer-term application deliverable over the proposed meanwhile use period. This request has also been previously considered using the Corporate Property Model's Asset Performance Assessment.
- 3.2. The night shelter and assessment centre allows the council to accommodate people who currently have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Haringey currently has a very high proportion of people rough sleeping with NRPF. Often, this cohort has significant mental or physical health needs which are unmet while street homeless. When left street homeless for months or years, these needs tend to escalate and often this results in pressure on expensive services elsewhere in the NHS or Council, including on Adult Social Care. There is strong evidence to show that those who are brought into accommodation are quickly supported to regularise their status and source appropriate accommodation.
- 3.3. The Council has been awarded £1,348,484 in the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2025 – 2026. £489,493 of this provision is awarded on the basis of the borough providing a night shelter. A governance process to accept the grant funding is in progress. If Cabinet decides not to accept the grant award when the report seeking acceptance comes before it, then an alternative source of funding will need to be identified and authorised to ensure that the Osborne Grove service was funded adequately.
- 3.4. Ring-fenced grant funding is available – and next year's funding has been confirmed - via the Rough Sleeping Initiative to deliver a night shelter at Osborne Grove, if accepted this funding will make the proposal cost neutral. The Council has a track record of successfully delivering services funded by grant, and Osborne Grove is a critical part of its approach to reducing

homelessness and rough sleeping. The service's budget for 2025/26 currently shows a small shortfall. This is due to having not received the final confirmation of additional funding by time of writing this report. This will have been received early in the new financial year. A full break down of the finances of the service for 2024/25 are available at Appendix A. This shows a projected gap in the funding available for 2026/27. A parallel piece of work is currently underway to look at rents in General Fund properties. Though this has not finished yet it is looking increasingly likely that rent and service charge will be raised above the figures used as the basis for this report and significantly reducing any potential shortfall. Additionally, it is assumed that the funding that has been available this year would be made available again, though it is expected that there would be an increase in the overall amount of funding as well as a change in the rules regarding ringfencing of funds which would allow the council to use the allocation in any way that we see fit which would allow that shortfall to be met.

- 3.5. An announcement of the long-term funding settlement for the Rough Sleeping Initiative is not expected until the end of 2025. If, once that announcement has been made it were clear that the council would be unable to continue funding the service the Housing Related Support would likely have to decant the building and stop delivering the service from Osborne Grove. This would leave the borough with no off-the-street accommodation for people sleeping rough in Haringey. As stated elsewhere in this report this would force the Council to revert to using private B&B placements that offer less value for money. This would be very likely to result in an increase in the number of people rough sleeping in Haringey.
- 3.6. If the building were to be emptied and remain empty until the next use was determined there would also be a cost associated with building security as well as the continued cost of building compliance works. This cost is hard to specify and would depend on the level of security needed. A conservative estimate for this would involve once daily visits by a mobile security operative and Sitex on the ground floor doors and windows which would cost approximately £33,560 per annum. This would increase significantly if the first-floor windows were covered too. These figures are based on publicly available information and information provided by the Council's preferred security firm.
- 3.7. The shortage of affordable nightly paid accommodation in the Borough has resulted in additional financial pressures for the Council. As of December 2024, this was projected to be an £12,000,000 overspend in providing temporary accommodation in 2024/25. Delivery of a night shelter at Osborne Grove does not contribute to that overspend and in fact reduces the need for nightly paid accommodation.

- 3.8. The London Borough of Haringey is committed to utilising assets in a way that dynamically and flexibly responds to need. The use of Osborne Grove as supported housing commenced in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government's *Everyone In* directive to accommodate everyone at risk of rough sleeping. This was a valuable, positive and cost-effective use of the building, and the service was mobilised at pace to minimise any risk of transmission in this vulnerable cohort.
- 3.9. Performance of the service has remained strong over the reporting period, with sustained reductions in rough sleeping rates across the borough. The service has effectively met key outcomes around rapid assessment, personalised support, and accommodation pathways, contributing to a measurable decrease in street homelessness. This success has been recognised by MHCLG, who formally commended the service for its impact, innovation, and collaborative approach.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1. **Do nothing:** Cabinet member could choose to not agree an extension of the meanwhile use of Osborne Grove. This would likely result in the building needing to be decanted, which would leave the Council without appropriate off-street accommodation for people rough sleeping in the borough and would also potentially lead to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asking for the awarded grant money to be returned. This could also cause some reputational damage with MHCLG as Haringey has previously been flagged as a borough of concern due to the number of people rough sleeping and there would be challenging questions as to why the council chose not to continue the use of the existing building and service that has already reduced the number of people rough sleeping in the borough by nearly 40%. This would also require the Council to revert to using private hotels to place single homeless people into accommodation or for those that would be owed a full duty nightly paid temporary accommodation through housing needs. This would increase the pressure on an already overspent temporary accommodation budget in the case of the latter and provide less suitable accommodation for fewer people in the case of the former.

5. Background information

- 5.1. Osborne Grove is a now-decommissioned nursing home, which was run by the Council until 2020, located on Upper Tollington Park, Finsbury Park.
- 5.2. Osborne Grove comprises 35 individual rooms and is currently being used by the Housing Related Support Team in Haringey Council as a night shelter and assessment centre.

- 5.3. The night shelter and assessment centre has been run as “off the street” accommodation, which is provided as a first step for people currently rough sleeping in the borough including some people who currently have no recourse to public funds. The focus of the service is rapid assessment and move on, aiming to support up to 70 people a year. Staff work assertively with people accessing the service to identify the most appropriate move-on option for them. Where people do not have recourse to public funds, they are provided accommodation for up to 12 weeks so their situation can be investigated and if they are eligible, are supported to make applications or access specialist support and advice to normalise their right to reside in the UK.
- 5.4. Prior to its full closure as a nursing home, Cabinet decided on 11 February 2020 following consultation, to recommission a new nursing home service on the site, demolishing the current two-storey building and replacing it with a 4-storey 70-bed nursing home and an 18 extra-care studio-flat facility. In the interim period those plans have been reassessed as unaffordable and there is not currently a long-term plan for redevelopment of the site, or an alternative potential use being considered.
- 5.5. The last few years saw the numbers of people rough sleeping in the borough increase dramatically. The council had secured funding through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) to open a Night Shelter but the building that had been identified was not available. Cabinet had previously authorised the HRS team to repurpose the existing supported accommodation service running out of Osborne Grove for the purpose of the night shelter and assessment centre.
- 5.6. Future proposals for the long-term use of the building will take into account the principles of the SAMPIP and the Corporate Property Model and will be set out clearly for stakeholders, residents and partners.

6. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026 High level Strategic outcomes’

- 6.1. This proposal would help us to meet the *Preventing and Reducing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping and Reduction in the Use of Temporary Accommodation* outcome areas in the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024 – 2026.

7. Carbon and Climate Change

- 7.1. From a carbon management perspective reuse of an existing building is likely to be the preferred option for a night shelter in the short-to-medium term. Unfortunately, the meanwhile use of Osborne Grove and limited budget

available precludes any significant capital works to reduce carbon equivalent (CO_{2e}) emissions.

- 7.2. Retrofitting insulation to the external walls of the building would likely be the most effective way to reduce CO_{2e} emissions, however the short lifetime of the night shelter means that the total impact would be relatively low, cause significant disruption for residents, and not be cost-effective for the Council.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Assistant Director of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

8.1. Finance

- 8.1.1. This report seeks to extend the Osborne Grove Night shelter for an additional two years until 01/04/2027.

- 8.1.2. The expected expenditure for Year 1 and 2 is expected to be £1,254,000 and £1,287,000 respectively. This service is expected to be cost neutral as rental income and various grants such as the RSI fund will be used to support the service. An assumption has been made that the grants expected in Year 2 will be the same as Year 1, albeit the funding has not been confirmed.

- 8.1.3. There is a projected shortfall of £45,579, however this shortfall does not factor any uplifts in grants or additional funding that maybe explored. Additionally, the rent charge to be administered is still to be finalised and may reduce the gap even further. In the instance that this shortfall cannot be reduced, the service will change the staffing model and reduce the capacity of the Night shelter in order to avoid putting pressure on the General fund.

- 8.1.4. If the grants assumed for Year 2 are not realised, there is significant financial impact to the council making this proposal unviable. In this case the service is ready to cease the activity early to ensure no risk to the council is realised.

8.2. Strategic Procurement

- 8.2.1. Strategic Procurement notes the content of this report. There are no procurement ramifications.

8.3. Assistant Director Legal & Governance [Robin Levett, Principal Projects Lawyer]

- 8.3.1. The Assistant Director Legal & Governance has been consulted in the drafting of this report and comments as follows:

- 8.3.2. MHCLG has offered a ring-fenced grant on condition that the monies are used for the sole purpose of providing Rough Sleeping Initiative funded services. Agreed grant funding conditions set out by the DLUHC require the sums to be spent to intervene, prevent and reduce rough sleeping in the fiscal year 2025/2026. If repurposing of funding is required, the authority is required to seek prior written approval to agree where services need to change to best meet need and end rough sleeping in Haringey.
- 8.3.3. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This power can be used for commercial purposes or otherwise for a charge, or without a charge. The Council may exercise this power for the benefit of the authority, its area, or persons resident or present in its area. It should be noted that the implementation of this decision is subject to the community right to challenge under the Localism Act.
- 8.3.4. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides powers for a local authority to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 8.3.5. Under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council has a general 'best value' duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 8.3.6. There is no legal reason why Cabinet should not adopt the recommendations set out in this report.

8.4. Equality

- 8.4.1. The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

- 8.4.2. The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status apply to the first part of the duty.
- 8.4.3. Although it is not enforced in legislation as protected characteristics, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 8.4.4. As part of the council's Rough Sleeping Strategy (2023-2028) a comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out to help identify how those who are rough sleeping in Haringey compared more broadly to the average across all the data collected on Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN). Data held by the Council suggests that women, Black communities, those who identify as LGBTQ+ and disabled individuals are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, as detailed in the Equalities Impact Assessment of the Council's Homelessness Strategy.
- 8.4.5. This decision seeks to extend a previous decision to use the Osborne Grove Nursing Home building as a night shelter for people experiencing rough sleeping.
- 8.4.6. Overall, the service is likely to have a positive impact on individuals who are vulnerable to homelessness. As such, it is reasonable to anticipate a positive impact on residents with protected characteristics who are overrepresented in the homeless population. This will help the Council to meet its equalities duties and address known inequalities affecting individuals with protected characteristics, in particular relating to age, sex, sexuality, gender identity, race, and disability. Accordingly, the decision represents progress to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.
- 8.4.7. The council already has policies in place in relation to equal opportunities and equality and diversity as well as compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.4.8. Protected characteristics are tracked on the CHAIN database case management and monitoring application on a monthly basis.

9. Use of Appendices

- 9.1. Appendix 1 – Osborne Grove Financial Summary 2024/25 – Part B exempt information